



# SUSQUEHANNOCK HIKER

On Foot in Potter County...God's Country



Spring 2016

PO Box 643 • Coudersport, PA 16915 • [www.stc-hike.org](http://www.stc-hike.org) • [info@stc-hike.org](mailto:info@stc-hike.org)

The purposes of the STC are to build and maintain trails, aid in the conservation of wetlands and wildlife, and promote good fellowship through the medium of hiking and nature study.

## 2016 Big Shoe Award

### Barb & Joe Allis



Photo by Lois Morev

By Wanda Shirk, President, STC

Joe and Barb Allis of Galeton, PA received the seventh annual *Big Shoes* award from the Susquehannock Trail Club at the club's January 9, 2016 meeting at the home of Gene and Myra Neefe in Coudersport.

More completely known as the *Wil and Betty Ahn Big Shoes Award*, the designation honors lifetime achievement in service to the club and to Potter

County trails. The award was first given to Wil and Betty Ahn upon their retirement in 2010 as president and secretary of the club for three decades. The *Big Shoes* concept connotes that recipients are leaving "mighty big shoes to fill."

The Allises' contributions to the club go back to the early '70s, when they memorably backpacked with Barb carrying their young son Ben, still in diapers, on her back, while Joe carried the tent and the rest of the family's food, bedding, and gear.

Barb served as the club's newsletter editor for 20 years and treasurer for 15 years. The newsletter job, then as now, entailed not only gathering news and pictures and laying out the paper, but also folding the papers and affixing mailing labels and stamps by hand, an assembly line process that involved the whole family including their children Ben and Ashley's childhood years.

Joe's gifts of time, talent, and manpower to the club are wide-ranging. Among other things, he was the master-engineer for the swinging bridge over the STS at the Lyman Run crossing in Lyman Run State Park, and he built the large outdoor display case near where the STS passes through Ole Bull State Park. Over the past 45 years, Joe has not only led hikes and overnight backpack-

ing trips, but has also spent uncountable hours maintaining trails, using equipment ranging from the ever-necessary chain saw to a *Smisher* mower in the summer and trail-setting equipment for cross-country skiers in the winter.

A master craftsman and woodworker, Joe has also made the annual plaques with the *Big Shoe* award -- made from a variety of colors and types of wood -- that are presented with the hiker's boot design. Joe did not know that he was crafting one for himself for this year. The identity of the recipients was kept a carefully guarded secret, so as to surprise the Allises—a ruse successfully accomplished. One plaque is given to the annual awardees, and another, which stays with the club, has spaces for the engraved names of each recipient for a ten-year period.

Previous recipients of the award, in addition to the Ahns, are Tom and Jayne Fitzgerald, Bob Knowles, Tom Leete, Dick Hribar, and Bill Boyd. The award includes a lifetime, paid-in-full, honorary membership in the STC. The "STC Chorus," composed this year of John Zimmer, Gene Neefe, Wanda Shirk, Alice Buchanan, and Lois Morev, sings a specially written tribute song *Leaving Mighty Big Shoes to Fill* in honor of the awardees.

Usually the award is presented at the club's annual awards dinner, *the Winter Frolic*, but knowing that the Allises have a ski trip to Canada planned for mid February, the club decided to surprise Barb and Joe at the January meeting. Retired Galeton School District teachers, the Allises are active square-dancers, cross-country skiers, and bicyclists as well as hikers. They've worn out a lot of pairs of shoes in their time, with no sign of letting up. But the "wooden shoes" they received this month are designed to last. ♪



### Next Newsletter Deadline

All articles must be received before **June 18, 2016** to be included in the next edition of the *Susquehannock Hiker*. Email your articles to [info@stc-hike.org](mailto:info@stc-hike.org), or mail them via the U.S. Postal Service no later than Saturday **June 13, 2016**, to **PO Box B, Robinson, PA 15949**. ♪

## Trail's End

### Hypothermia Fatality

By Wanda Shirk

I just got word of a great tragedy. An American-Chinese woman, Hua Davis, age 61, froze to death on an Adirondack high peak on March 4. She was an incredible woman – brilliant and very fit, an amazing hiker. She was also a doctor: had a medical degree in China, but had to re-certify to practice medicine here, which she was working on.

Google “Hua Davis” and you can read the account of the tragedy. Two things of personal interest to me.

Hua hiked with the group known as DC-UL – Washington DC -Ultra Light Backpackers. DC-UL hiked the STS two years ago in a couple different trips. Four members completed the whole trail and sent in a circuit hiker log. Hua hiked on part of the STS but did not do the whole trail, so she is not on our circuit hiker list.

Interesting story: DC-UL was hiking the Donut Hole Trail, and she was a fast hiker so she was ahead of the group. Where the DHT joins the STS on the top of Fork Hill, she turned right on the STS-Rattlesnake Trail and went all the way to Ole Bull SP instead of turning left to stay on the combined DHT-STS to Cross Fork. The rest of the group didn't know where she had gone until she hitched a ride to rejoin them.

Some members of the DC-UL group occasionally participate in KTA trail care weekends, because they hike a lot in Pennsylvania. Last summer a group of them came up to Tioga County for a trail-care on the Mid State Trail. I had the privilege of meeting Hua and getting to know her just a little bit. She was so lively and fun and smart. I cannot imagine what it would have been like for her to freeze to death alone on Mount MacNaughton.

So, so sad.

---

### Memories Of Jack Frombach

By Penny Weinhold

Jack Frombach, Sr. of Coudersport passed away Jan. 16, 2016, at the Age of 75. Always enthused about everything in the outdoors, and sharing his faith with all who knew him, Jack will be missed by all his family and friends.

It's hard to recall the exact year, but in the early 1990's Jack led the STC on a Ham and Leek Hike down in the Hammersley Wild Area along the STS. A great baker, by trade, Jack took all the makings for biscuits, a big pan and a grate for over a fire. There were at least 10 hikers and each carried either ham, potatoes, or other foods in their packs for

a real feast. All dug and cleaned leeks in the creek. Jack had the goods cooking in no time!

With tents already set-up, after evening campfire, all settled in for the night with tummies brim-full.

Then to head back out. It was a Sunday, the third week of April, which meant no leafy trees overhead to cool us for the miles back to our cars. The temperature was 85 degrees by 2:00 pm--unusual for that time of year. Some shared their dwindling water bottles with others. Whew! What a grunt getting back to the cars!

Of note: Jack and his wife, Naomi cooked some of the meals for our Winter Frolic Dinners in the following years. Always truly a treat.

Rest in peace, dear Jack! All who knew you truly loved your happy nature. ☹



### Letters to the Editor

By Bob Ross

The article entitled *Good News for Skiers and Snowshoers* by Tom Fitzgerald in the Winter 2016 issue of *Susquehanna Hiker* caught my attention because of the false expectations it may generate for winter enthusiasts. The predictions generated from Casey's theory are contrary to what we are seeing in terms of global temperature trends.

The consensus among climate scientists is that CO<sub>2</sub> levels in the atmosphere, rising steadily over the past few decades and showing no sign of change in that trend, are the principal cause of global warming on earth. Solar intensity is on a downswing currently and cannot therefore explain current global heat trends.

Rising CO<sub>2</sub> levels from ice cores dating back hundreds of thousands of years ago are consistent with known warmer climates (evidenced by sea-level changes and biota changes) of the same periods, and these are highly correlated. Volcanic activity, also causing rising CO<sub>2</sub> levels in past millennia, as well as other natural causes, including solar/-orbital cycles, were responsible for global warming in the past.

The USGS states that human activities generate over 100 times as much atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> as do volcanos per year. That level of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> has now reached 400 ppm for the first time in human history. These observations are inconsistent with the hypothesis that the sun's activity is the principal driver of climate change. Casey's thesis is a minority view among the world's climatologists. ☹

## 2016 Trail Maintenance Plans

### Mile Markers and other Improvements

By Wanda Shirk

#### New Footbridge in the Hogback



Photo by Curt Weinhold

Highlight projects for the STS for the upcoming 2016 year include the shelter at the head of Scoval Branch, new single-log bridges (over Yochum Run, and possibly in Greenlick Run and the Hammersley), and perhaps the addition of some bog bridging in wet areas. We hope new benches will pop up at various places along the trail as well. One more major project being undertaken is putting mile-markers along the trail.

Only a few Pennsylvania trails have mile markers. The first ones I encountered were the red-and-yellow painted can lids on the Loyalsock Trail. I loved coming across them as I backpacked the route. They gave me a feeling of progress, and they let me know where I was in relation to the guidebook description of the trail. Recently Glen and Karen Yasharian of Wyalusing started section hiking our trail, and when I assisted them with spotting a car, they mentioned that they thought the STS should have mile markers, like their home-trail, the Loyalsock. I said that I completely agreed, and had wanted to do that for the STS ever since I saw the ones on the Loyalsock when I hiked it in 2002. I'd gotten a special can-opener that cut lids off with a smooth edge, and I saved scores of lids from 28 ounce cans, mostly kidney bean cans from making chili, over the past dozen years.

Glen and Karen's prompting got me started on the project. I've spray-painted the lids orange and put the mile numbers on with black permanent marker. Using a measuring wheel, I started at Denton Hill and have now completed mile markers for the first 20 miles of the trail. As I go along, I've been clearing debris and making notes of where we can improve the trail, such as in marshy areas and at stream crossings. That, in fact, was what prompted the

action of our trail crew to get the new log bridges over Cross Fork Creek and Little Lyman Run in mile 19-20 -- long overdue. Hikers have been making detours and finding various ways -- sometimes slippery and scary -- to ford at these locations, and it was impossible to measure the trail accurately there. Now we have good crossings and the trail can be measured accurately at these places. Getting a log-bridge across Yochum Run in the next mile will be a factor in going forward with the mile marker project.

There are probably two main reasons that more trails don't have mile markers. The biggest one is that the project simply takes time. Another is that some trails are subject to relocations that can make mile markers inaccurate. The Standing Stone Trail, for example, has mile markers for about the first dozen miles, but continued relocations kept requiring re-calculation, so their mile marker project has been abandoned for the foreseeable future. (It was interesting, though. When I slacked the trail with a group of five in August 2014, we saw wooden posts at intervals, with numbers and with the letters GF on one side and CG on the other. For the longest time we could not figure out what the posts were about. Finally I realized that the Standing Stone Trail goes between Greenwood Furnace and Cowans Gap State Parks, and the letters and numbers told the trail distance on each side of the post to the respective "GF" in the north and "CG" in the south.) By contrast with the sometimes-changing Standing Stone Trail route, the STS route has been very stable over nearly 50 years now.

Other trails with mile markers include the John P. Saylor Trail (2 loops, totaling 17 miles, of the most level, easy trail you'll find in Pennsylvania), and the Laurel Highlands Trail, which I've heard has cement mile markers, though I haven't yet hiked that trail and seen them for myself.

The STS has had only a couple short relocations since Curt Weinhold ran the wheel around it almost 50 years ago and established the numbers that have been used in the guidebook ever since. The new measurements are fairly close to the ones in the guidebook, with the 1997 relocation near the Lyman Run Road crossing in mile 6 changing the figures by just a fraction of a mile.

Mile markers will be enjoyed and appreciated by most hikers, to give them a sense of their accomplishment and their

#### Mileage Marker



Photo by Curt Weinhold

location. They can't be 100% accurate, with stream crossings and rocks and roots or detours around an occasional blowdown affecting any calculation. However, Glen Yasharian, a surveyor, says the wheel is still the best and most accurate way to measure a trail. The placement of individual mile markers also depends on the proximity of an appropriate tree when the wheel reads 5,280. As the project proceeds, one additional positive result is that the trail is being step-by-step re-assessed to prioritize trail improvement projects. The STS keeps getting better and better – with HUGE THANKS to faithful section maintainers and the great volunteer trail crew led by our trail master Bill Boyd. ♪



## Satisfactions of Slackpacking

By Wanda Shirk, President, STC

“What’s a slackpack?” asked Wellis at one of our Susquehannock Trail Club meetings some time ago.

It’s interesting to reflect on how new terms come into our vocabularies, sometimes with a particularity of occasion. After having taught high schoolers for over three decades, I can remember precisely from which students I first encountered certain terms such as “24/7” in Kirk Miller’s autobiography, a “hoodie” when Bryan Kear’s went missing from the cafeteria, or “hotties” in Nicole Miller’s essay about going to the mall “looking for hotties.” (Did she mean hot pads? Mittens? Warm underwear? A hot water bottle? I had to ask her to find out that it meant attractive young bodies of the opposite sex.)

I first encountered “Slackpack” when Becky Schreiber developed the Chuck Keiper Slackpack for Prowl the Sproul a few years ago. I thought she invented the term, but apparently it has a history that goes back decades.

Richard Judy tells the story in his book, *Thru: An Appalachian Trail Love Story* (of which you can purchase from Amazon through the *Amazon Smile* program and support both the Appalachian Trail Museum and the Keystone Trails Association or the Susquehannock Trail Club). Apparently, a long-ago group of AT thru-hikers known as the South Georgia Heathens had a protracted stop at a roadhouse café known for delectable pies. One of them, frustrated at the day’s major downtime, proclaimed that they weren’t so much backpackers as “slackpackers.” The play on words wrought a laugh that was repeated in frequent retellings of pie-day.

Deviating from the etymology, the term has come to be used to describe long-distance hiking with “Support by

vehicle, so that the main part of your gear stays in the car while you carry snacks, water, and rain gear in a day pack,” to use Judy’s phrasing. He explains that “most thru-hikers who get ‘slacked’ view it as an opportunity to put in long days with minimal effort.” Day-hiking a significant trail section with shuttles and “luggage-forwarding” service (or transportation to comfortable lodging) obviates the need to carry overnight gear. Hikers can get showers, real beds, and evening meals that aren’t just trail food.”

In both 2014 and 2015, a group of us did a seven-day slackpack of the STS. At 85 miles, it’s PA’s ninth-longest trail and the longest loop. It’s back-packable in a week for most hikers, but “slackpacking” allows one to take in all the beauty of the trail without the stress on hips, back, and knees that accompanies carrying food and shelter for a week.

Rare white *Hepatica acutiloba*



Photo by Curt Weinhold

The 7-day slackpack is again scheduled for 2016—April 30 to May 6. Out-of-area people who wish to join the slackpack can get lodging and all meals for the week for \$85 per day (\$595 for the week.) To make arrangements, please contact me, Wanda Shirk, at phone (814) 848-7944 or email [wshirk49@outlook.com](mailto:wshirk49@outlook.com). The fee includes daily shuttles to and from all trailheads, good food, and a fun and memorable week.

Some folks think slackpacking has the merit of making some body parts last longer than they otherwise might. Besides the knees we cherish, this could even include toenails. I was amused when a non-hiker friend of mine read Cheryl Strayed’s *Wild* and asked if I’d ever lost any toenails while backpacking. Yes! I’m up to 5 of 10 on that count!

“Keep trees in your heart, and the birds will come there to sing.” Happy Trails ♪



## Kayak/Canoe Trip

Please contact Penny Weinhold ASAP if interested in a Kayak/Canoe trip in either late spring or early summer. We are now gathering a list of paddlers. We will have our time out on a nearby lake where rentals are available. Include phone number and or email. Due to past weather conditions (rain) there will be short notice (3 or 4 days). You can contact Penny at [penny1@zitomedia.net](mailto:penny1@zitomedia.net) or call her at (814) 274-9858. ♪

# Old Geezer Hiking Memories

## The Larsen Trail

By Bob Knowles

Arnold Larsen was born in Brooklyn, NY, and lived in Norway as a child. A cross-country and downhill skier, he served 20 years in the National Ski Patrol. Larsen is a former land and sea private pilot. Arnold often kidded that the Old Geezer tried to change Larsen’s ethnic nationality from Norwegian to Swedish by changing the letter “e” in his last name to “o.”

Arnold and Karen Larsen joined the Susquehannock Trail Club in April 1997. Their first STC hike was at the 1997 Summer Camporee. They were STC members for 17 years; 1997-2013. They presently live in Whitefish, Montana, near their daughter and granddaughter. At 87 years of age, Arnold short-hikes nearby trails with two canes.

Checking with other older STC members about the Larsen Trail produced some interesting comments. Arnold and Karen Larsen wrote the Old Geezer that there was a clearing alongside the Rock Ridge Road where they liked to park their car. It was a short 50-100 yards from the STS through overgrowth which they cleared. Arnold told the Old Geezer that he made the “Larsen Trail” sign and obtained the signpost. I had forgotten that.

I also inquired of Wil and Betty Ahn about their memories of the Larsen Trail. The Ahns are great friends of the Old Geezer and my wife, Jeanie. In fact, it was Wil and Betty who interested the Old Geezer in joining the STC and working on some of the early trail-clearing work. Wil also led group and lone hikes.

Wil Ahn wrote, “Concerning the Larsen Trail you don’t remember, after you and Arnie Larsen completed the entire 85-mile STS [in May 2000] so Arnie could get the[Circuit Hiker #849] award, you told me about a section of trail just off the Rock Ridge Road. There had been some timbering in that section, and the loggers clearcut and left a lot of tops and fallen trees over the STS.

“It was a real mess and a lot of work to clean up. However, there was a skid road and deer trail nearby that you and Arnie and I located and used to relocate a short section of the STS. Arnie was instrumental in finding it, so it was named the Larsen Trail or bypass. The three of us spent several trips and clearings to make it passable. It had a view looking toward Prouty Place Park. Hope that helps you get oriented. When you come off the Larsen Trail to Rock Ridge Road, you then head south on the Sarah Jane Trail to Prouty Place State Park.”

The Old Geezer remembers several weekday hikes with Arnie Larsen. He taught me a lot about trees: the two-lobed, three-lobed, and five-lobed leaves to be found on a small to medium size tree, to 50 feet high—the sassafras tree. Other day hikes we enjoyed were the Bristol Swamp Pond hike, the Beech Bottom Hollow hike to view old-growth timber, and several pre-hikes checking out the route for upcoming club hikes, plus several out-of-the-area day hikes. ☺

## Welcome New Members

By Lois Morey, STC Secretary

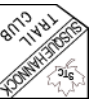
- |                                   |                                     |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Jill Adami<br>Galeton, PA         | Brian McCusker<br>Coudersport, PA   |
| Nate Confer<br>Coudersport, PA    | Julie McCusker<br>Coudersport, PA   |
| Kim Eckenrode<br>Genesee, PA      | Bill Moon<br>Ulysses, PA            |
| Burdette Erway<br>Coudersport, PA | Vicky Moon<br>Ulysses, PA           |
| Teena Erway<br>Coudersport, PA    | Gary Stonbraker<br>Punxsutawney, PA |
| Patty Gianotti<br>Coudersport, PA | Ronda Vanatter<br>Genesee, PA       |
| Wayne Irish<br>Coudersport, PA    | Leigh Williams<br>Waterford, PA     |
| Doug Kosa<br>Ulysses, PA          | Tim Williams<br>Waterford, PA       |

## STS Circuit Hiker Award

Congratulations to the following who are the most recent inductees into this distinguished group!

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1115 Benji Schalbach<br>Oldtown, MD    | 1122 Jayden Craft<br>Oldtown, MD       |
| 1116 Nathaneal Shrock<br>Oldtown, MD   | 1123 Brayden Bollman<br>Oldtown, MD    |
| 1117 Luke Hoyman<br>Oldtown, MD        | 1124 Aaron Miller<br>Oldtown, MD       |
| 1118 Nicholas Jarvis<br>Oldtown, MD    | 1125 Tristan Martin<br>Oldtown, MD     |
| 1119 Christopher Miller<br>Oldtown, MD | 1126 Patrick Blair<br>Philadelphia, PA |
| 1120 Victor Sellers<br>Oldtown, MD     | 1127 Joseph Iole<br>Philadelphia, PA   |
| 1121 Austin Weaver<br>Oldtown, MD      |  |

Susquehanna Trail Club  
PO Box 643  
Coudersport PA 16915



## Upcoming Event Schedule

**April 3, 2016**

Hike at the PA Lumber Museum

**April 16, 2016**

Meeting @ PA Lumber Museum

**April 30, 2016**

Hike: Denton Hill - Cherry Springs Tower

**May 1, 2016**

Hike: Cherry Springs Tower - Ole Bull

**May 2, 2016**

Hike: Ole Bull - Ted's Truss

**May 3, 2016**

Hike: Ted's Truss - Cross Fork

**May 4, 2016**

Hike: Hammersley Wild Area

**May 5, 2016**

Hike: McConnell Rd - Rock Ridge Rd

**May 6, 2016**

Hike: Rock Ridge Rd - Denton Hill

**May 14, 2016**

Meeting @ John Zimmer's

**June 4, 2016**

God's Country Marathon

**June 11, 2016**

Meeting @ Lyman Run SP

**July 9, 2016**

Meeting @ Donna Batterson's

**August 11 – 14, 2016**

Summer Camporee @ Ole Bull

**September 10, 2016**

Meeting @ the Saulter's Preserve

**October 8, 2016**

Meeting @ Wanda Shirk's

**November 12, 2016**

Meeting @ PA Lumber Museum

**December 10, 2016**

Christmas Party @ Lois Morey's

**Kayak/Canoe Trip is being planned for late spring or early summer.**  
Contact Penny Weinhold at [penny1@zitomedia.net](mailto:penny1@zitomedia.net) or (814) 274-9858 for details